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BLM ALASKA
FRONTIERS

Issue 109 • Spring 2010
News about BLM's National System of Public Lands in Alaska

BLM

Alaska

BLM celebrates 10 years of the National Landscape Conservation System

As BLM offices throughout the country are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), the agency is focusing on sharing the value and significance of these 27 million acres of specially designated public lands with the American people. Alaska, which manages over two million acres of NLCS land in nine units, is no exception. For many, the NLCS is ten years young and not so well known as its counterparts—the National Parks, National Forests, and National Wildlife Refuges.

Craig McCaa

Hiking on the Pinnell Mountain National Recreation Trail in the Steese National Conservation Area.

What is the NLCS?

Created by the Secretary of the Interior in 2000, the NLCS is managed by the BLM. The system consists of National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, designated Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas, National Wild and Scenic Rivers System components, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and Conservation Lands of the California Desert.

The distinctive landscapes within the NLCS are particularly prized because of their exceptional scientific, cultural, ecological, historical, and recreational resources. Nationally, these uniquely diverse resources range from red-rock deserts, rugged ocean coastlines, deep river canyons, to our own broad Alaskan tundra. The NLCS consists of 886 federally recognized areas, including 8,425 miles of rivers and trails. Last year, President Obama signed legislation permanently ensuring NLCS areas the protection that they deserve.

Gene Ervine, BLM-Alaska's NLCS coordinator, agrees that the 2009 Omnibus Public Lands Management Act (Public Law 111-11) "...was a big deal. The NLCS has been a long time developing, but BLM now has what will be an effective tool for protecting the treasured landscapes of the West."

Learn more about the NLCS in Alaska and how you can enjoy BLM's crown jewels by attending 10th Anniversary celebration events. Even if you can't attend these events, explore the NCLS units throughout Alaska and join the silver anniversary celebration.

—Danielle Allen and K J Mushovic
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— More NCLS on page 2

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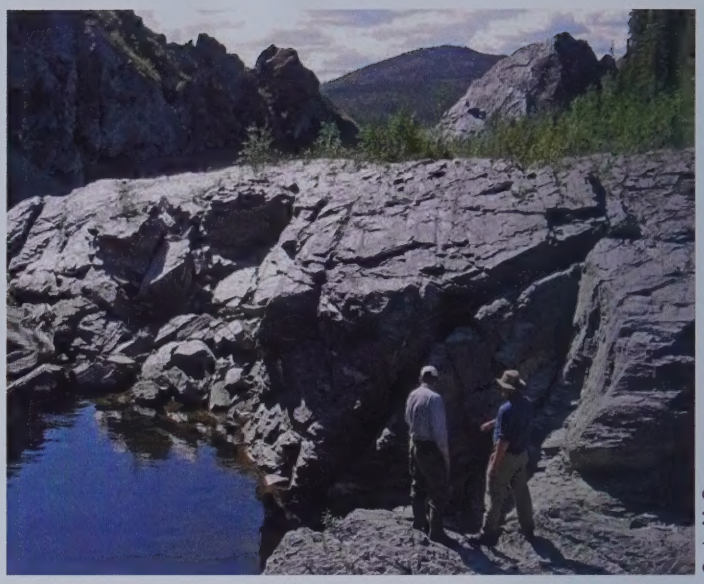
Marnie Graham



Craig McCaa

(Top) **Visitors at the Fortymile National Wild and Scenic River.** *(Left)* **Monique Couture was hired through the Student Conservation Association to work as a summer crew member on the Gulkana Wild and Scenic River.**

Upcoming NLCS Events in Alaska	
DATE	**EVENT**
April 8-11	Great Alaska Sportsman Show-Anchorage: BLM-Alaska's exhibit
April 16-18	Fairbanks Outdoor Show-Fairbanks: BLM-Alaska's exhibit
June 19	Public Lands Day trail restoration project at Tangle Lakes Campground, near Paxson
Aug. 26-Sept. 6	Iditarod Trail Centennial Celebration at the Alaska State Fair, Palmer

Alaska NLCS Units

1. Steese National Conservation Area
2. Iditarod National Historic Trail
3. Central Arctic Management Wilderness Area
4. Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River
5. Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River
6. Birch Creek Wild and Scenic River
7. Fortymile Wild and Scenic River
8. Delta Wild and Scenic River
9. Gulkana Wild and Scenic River

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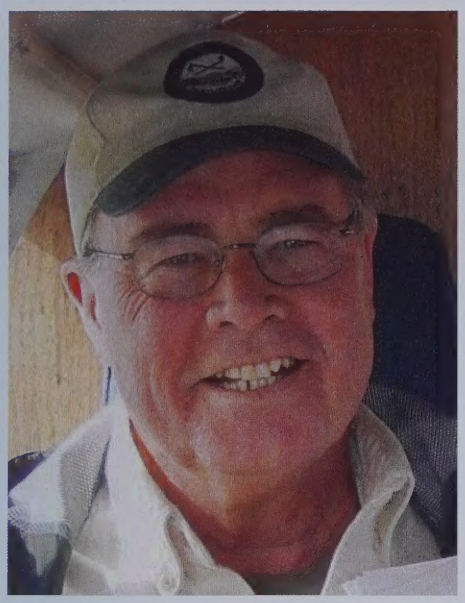
BLM-Alaska State Director Announces Retirement Plans



After more than three years leading BLM-Alaska and 32 years of federal service with the BLM, U.S. Geological Survey, and Minerals Management Service, Tom Lonnie (shown left) plans to retire in April.

Originally from Long Island, New York, Lonnie's federal career took him to Wyoming, Montana, and Washington, D.C., before his arrival in Alaska in late 2006. While here, Lonnie oversaw the implementation of the Alaska Land Transfer Acceleration Act, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act projects, organizational realignments, a 2008 oil and gas lease sale and completion of two Legacy well remediation projects in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, and several land use planning efforts.

In announcing his plans to employees, Lonnie said, "I believe our mission of managing the public lands for multiple-use is the most difficult mission of any federal land management agency. Yet its diversity, economic and environmental significance to local communities and the country make it the most important."

His calm leadership and distinctive accent will be missed.

— KJ Mushovic
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Introducing the White Mountains 100:
An Extreme Winter Ultra Marathon Race

Alaska's newest extreme winter ultra marathon race is set to debut in the White Mountains National Recreation Area from Mar. 21-23, 2010. Fifty hardy competitors will run, bike, or ski a 100-mile-long loop that begins at the Wickersham Dome Trailhead. The route will traverse segments of Trail Creek, Cache Mt. Loop, Fossil Creek, and Wickersham Creek trails before returning to the Wickersham Dome Trailhead. Three BLM-managed public-use cabins located along the race course will serve as safety checkpoints.

Many people are interested in this race. All 50 available openings for contestants were quickly filled and many more added to a waiting list. The BLM requires a Special Recreation Permit for competitive events on BLM-managed public lands. These permits help the BLM manage visitor use, protect natural and cultural resources, and provide a way for commercial recreational uses to occur on public lands.

Once the race organizers applied for the permit, the BLM Eastern Interior Field Office created an interdisciplinary team to look at potential impacts of the event on resources and users of the White Mountains. They received close to 100 public comments between December and January on their draft environmental assessment of the race.

The team considered the following issues in the environmental assessment:

- Possible displacement of other cabin users.
- Increased level of use on the trails due to the race.
- Health concerns related to human waste.
- Safety issues directly attributable to the race.
- Effects, if any, on historic values, subsistence uses and fish habitat.

The team then developed mitigation measures to minimize the effects of the event. When the field office issued the Special Recreation Permit authorizing the race, the terms required organizers to change the proposed race date and start time to avoid use of cabins and trails by the general public. Other stipulations addressed traffic, congestion, firewood gathering, human waste disposal and post-race cleanup.

Craig McCaa

Skijoring in the White Mountains National Recreation Area.

Stepping stones to careers for Alaska's youth

BLM-Alaska will expand youth employment and training efforts significantly in 2010. This is good news for young Alaskan adults hoping to enter the workforce in the near future.

To do this, the BLM will combine efforts with established organizations who do this well, expanding our partnership with some while exploring new ways to partner with others.

One such partner is the Alaska Job Corps. In 2009 three Job Corps students worked at the BLM Campbell Tract. In 2010 BLM Job Corps participants will gain experience at job sites in more remote places, including the BLM's Bering Glacier field camp in southcentral Alaska and along sections of the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

Luanne Cross of the Alaska Job Corps Center in Palmer works with instructors to match student's skills and strengths with employer needs. Cross will select Job Corps students to work at Bering camp and Iditarod sites where new shelter cabins will be constructed this summer.

"Our students transition well into camp situations since they live and study together here at the Job Corps campus," Cross explains. "The students we select will be self-starters with good leadership skills, experienced in outdoor living and camping."

Sarah Andrew, a Job Corps participant from Manokotak employed at the BLM Anchorage Field Office says, "This training gave me more confidence. It helped me think about my career goals and what I want to do."

For more information about these programs and other BLM-Alaska youth employment and training opportunities, contact the BLM field office nearest you. Visit www.blm.gov/ak for a list of field offices in Alaska and contact information.

— Teresa McPherson
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Teresa McPherson

Sarah Andrew, Alaska Job Corps participant.

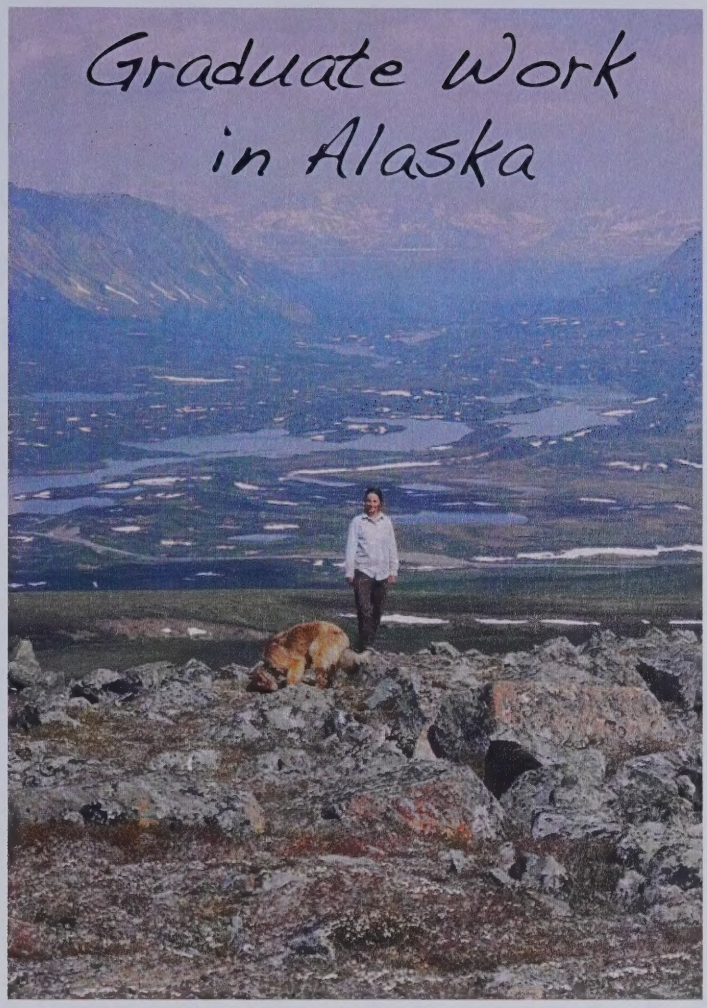
More Job Skill Development and Training Opportunities for Youth Provided by BLM-Alaska

- Representatives from BLM-Alaska are participating on a newly established national BLM Youth Initiative Steering Committee. This working group helps the BLM enhance career opportunities for youth and young adults across the nation.
- Expanded use of the BLM Student Training and Employment Program (STEP). This hiring authority allows the BLM to recruit and hire students from local communities and provides a competitive entry-level wage while students develop or refine job skills. Students help with trail maintenance, fisheries monitoring, archaeological inventories, and administrative tasks.
- Hiring Student Conservation Association (SCA) youth to help with on-the-ground natural resources work, such as river management on high-use Wild and Scenic Rivers.
- Partnerships with Southeast Alaska Guidance Association, Mennonite Service Adventure Program, Alaska Military Youth Academy, and other organizations that teach stewardship through service learning opportunities.
- Partnerships with local schools, villages, and non-profits to expose youth to natural resources careers through place based education, such as the Unalakleet Watershed Education Program and Iditarod Trail in Every Classroom (iTREC) program.
- Outreach to high school and university students through job fairs around the state.

Science Center Friends Group Recognized

Imagine raising over $150,000 in cash donations to support the trails, woods, and science center you love? What about being able to provide scholarships for 5,000 economically disadvantaged youth to attend programs at the science center? This is why the Friends of the Campbell Creek Science Center group were selected to receive the BLM's Public Lands Partnership 2010 Excellence Award. The prestigious award recognizes interpretive associations and Friends groups who have demonstrated exceptional support for the BLM's interpretive, environmental education, and/or outreach programs. For Joette Storm, current president of the Friends of the Campbell Creek Science Center, it was a proud moment last month at the Association of Partners for Public Lands annual convention in San Diego when she received this award on behalf of the Friends. Congratulations to the Friends on this award. The Campbell Creek Science Center and the BLM are lucky to have such dedicated volunteers and friends.

Anchorage Field Manager Jim Fincher, Friends Board Member Amanda Smith, Friends President Joette Storm, and BLM Chief of Division of Education, Interpretation, and Partnerships Mary Tisdale.



John Jangala

University of Wyoming graduate student Caroline Ketron spent last summer working in Alaska. Traveling by canoe, oar-raft, and all-terrain vehicle, Ketron was a crew leader for the BLM Glennallen Field Office. She conducted surveys along the Gulkana River, recording late-prehistoric Ahtna pit houses and testing for late Pleistocene shore lines, and conducted surveys in the Tangle Lakes Archaeological District. This photo shows her working for the BLM near the Denali Highway.

Youth at Alaska Forum on the Environment

Alaska's largest environmental conference, the Alaska Forum on the Environment, hosted youth presentations this year for the first time. Four students, representing the Copper River Stewardship Project and ATV Education Program cosponsored by the BLM Glennallen Field Office, presented at the "Showcase of Effective Youth-Adult Partnerships for the Environment." Their presentation helped federal and state agencies explore effective ways to incorporate youth into their missions and goals.

— Marnie Graham
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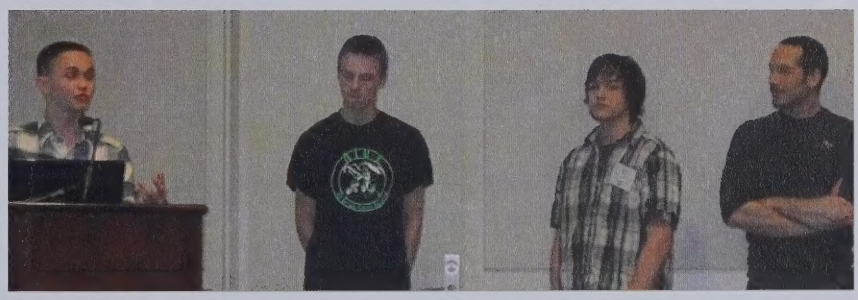


Peter Stortz

(Left to Right) **Ryan Codo, Keaton Shepherd, Cody Brown, and 4-H leader Ian Dorsey talk about how "Take it Outside" funds and their BLM-cosponsored programs taught them about watersheds, river history, culture, economics, geology, hydrology, and impacts to resources. The group also recognized how youth can effectively teach other youth about safe ATV practices and stewardship of public lands and trails.**

ALASKA STIMULUS PROJECT

American Recovery & Reinvestment Act

ARRA Project Underway at Drew Point, National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska

USGS

Thanks to American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding, work began at the Drew Point Legacy Well site in February and is nearly completed. **Look for more photos and an update in Issue 110 of BLM-Alaska Frontiers.**

PUTTING ALASKANS TO WORK
FARTHEST NORTH PROJECT FUNDED BY THE
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
Drew Point Legacy Well Plugging and Site Remediation

Bob Schneider

Bob Schneider

(Top) **Severe coastal erosion along the Beaufort Sea and watersheds of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska has threatened old exploratory oil wells drilled before BLM was managing these public lands. Drew Point is the fourth legacy well that BLM-Alaska is capping and remediating before the site becomes submerged under the encroaching Bering Sea.**

(Middle) **Freezing temperatures may seize mechanical actions or short delicate circuits. This plane at Drew Point stays plugged into a portable generator and wears an insulated engine apron to keep functioning in temperatures as low as -45 degrees F.**

(Left) **BLM-Alaska State Director Tom Lonnie holds this sign at the edge of the Drew Point Legacy Well remediation project on March 10.**

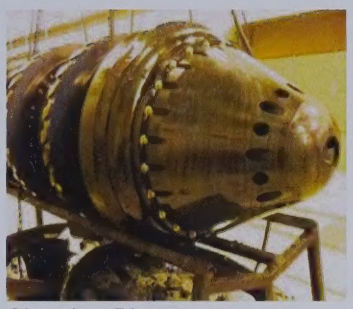
Find out more at http://www.recovery.gov

CORRECTION: Above caption should be the **Beaufort Sea**, not *Bering*.

FRONTIERS Flashes

News from around Alaska

Pigging the Trans-Alaska Pipeline



Cleaning Pig

Every 4-7 days, Alyeska Pipeline Services runs a cleaning pig through the 48" mainline Trans-Alaska Pipeline to remove wax deposits and water. This isn't the only pig that goes through the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. In-line inspection tools, called "smart pigs," run every three years to inspect the condition of the pipes. The last smart pig inspection was in October 2009. Rather than running separate tools as done in the past, Alyeska now uses a combination tool to inspect for corrosion, deformation, and curvature. Timely inspections allow Alyeska to make necessary repairs before they effect the pipe integrity. In the more than 30 years Alyeska has been operating the pipeline, involving 62 smart pig inspections, there have been no leaks on the mainline pipe due to corrosion. In 1977, the oil began to flow through the pipeline. To date, over 16 billion barrels of oil have moved through the pipeline, with throughput changing from just over two million barrels daily in 1988 to about 650,000 barrels per day in 2009. The BLM is the lead federal agency in the Joint Pipeline Office for oversight of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. You can find an electronic version of the 2009 FACTS book on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System at http://www.alyeska-pipe.com/Pipelinefacts/FACT-BOOK.pdf

Campbell Tract Facility Plan Amendment Underway

With more than 162,000 visitors annually, managing the scenic 730-acre Campbell Tract in Anchorage involves careful planning. A management plan amendment and associated environmental analysis is currently underway to consider potential uses, issues, opportunities and concerns not addressed in the initial 1988 Campbell Tract management plan. The tract includes a BLM administrative site, the Campbell Creek Science Center, and a Special Recreation Management Area. The amended plan will guide how the BLM manages the tract for the next ten years. The public scoping process for the amended plan ends April 30. For more information, contact the Anchorage Field Office at ak_ctf_amend@blm.gov or phone (907) 267-1246.

Delta Management Plan Comments Sought

The BLM Glennallen Field Office will release the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Delta River Special Recreation Management Area Plan and associated East Alaska Resource Management Plan Amendment on March 23 for public comment. The draft EA will be available for review on the BLM Delta River planning website at: http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/nlcs/delta_nwsr/Delta_River_Planning.html. Written comments will be due to the BLM Glennallen Field Office by Thursday, April 22, 2010.

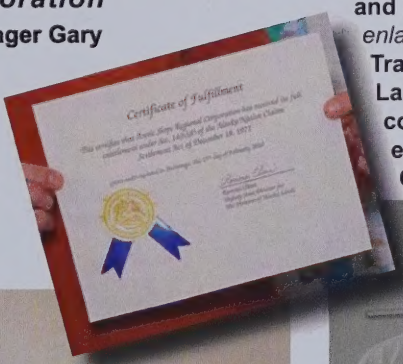
Latest Alaska Land Transfers:

Elim Native Corporation & Arctic Slope Regional Corporation

(Below Left) **Anchorage District Manager Gary Reimer** *(front, center)* **shakes hands with Robert Keith, President of the Elim Native Corporation, with Elim's Board Members, after signing their final land patent under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA).**

Christy Favorite

(Below Right) **Ramona Chinn, Deputy State Director for the Division of Alaska Lands, stands next to Erik Kenning** *(front left)* **of the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, and holds their Certificate of Fulfillment** *(shown enlarged in center photo).* **Also shown are BLM Land Transfer Resolution Specialists** *(back row)* **Joe Labay and Michael Bilancione. The patent signing completes the ANCSA Section 14(h)(8) acreage entitlement for the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation.**



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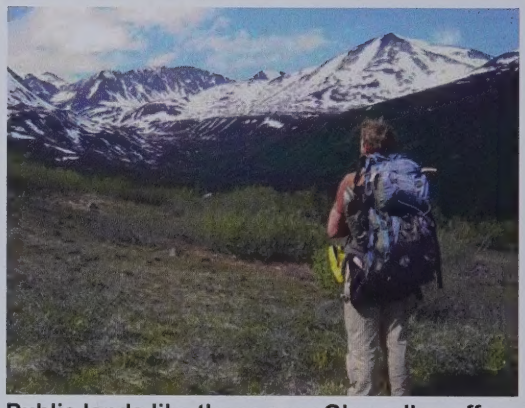
BLM-ALASKA FRONTIERS...
From the Managing Editor

Plan Now for an Alaskan Summer

Summer is right around the corner. Our BLM-Alaska Web site has nearly everything you need to know before you go, where to go, and what to do when you get there. Here you can find that summer adventure of a lifetime – whether it is on the trails, waterways, or highways across BLM-managed public lands. There are maps and brochures; lists of what to bring; information on outdoor ethics, permits, permitted commercial recreation, and safety. You can also find pages on each of the BLM offices, and make reservations through Recreation.gov. Start now and make this a summer you and your family or friends will never forget. http://www.blm.gov/ak (click on "Recreation" under What We Do on the main page).



Public lands like those near Glennallen offer great hiking opportunities and picturesque views.

— Karen J. Laubenstein
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